



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Michael D. Planet
*Executive Officer/Clerk
and Jury Commissioner*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 16, 2005

Contact: Robert Sherman
Assistant Executive Officer
(805) 654-2964

DEDICATION CEREMONY TO BE HELD FOR NEW JUVENILE COURTHOUSE

After more than six years of planning, design and construction, the Ventura Superior Court's new Juvenile Courthouse will be opening for business on Monday, March 28, 2005. A dedication ceremony will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2005 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the new courthouse, located at the Judge Steven Z. Perren Juvenile Justice Complex, 4333 Vineyard Avenue in Oxnard.

Keynote speakers will include Judge Brian J. Back, Supervising Juvenile Judge; Sheila Gonzalez, Regional Administrative Director for the Administrative Office of the Courts; and Justice Steven Z. Perren. Opening comments will be made by Presiding Judge John R. Smiley; Judge Bruce A. Clark, former Presiding Judge; and Kathy Long, chair of the Board of Supervisors. Court Executive Officer Michael D. Planet will be the Master of Ceremonies. Tours of the courthouse will be offered at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Planning for the Juvenile Courthouse began in 1998 when then Presiding Judge Charles Campbell and former Court Executive Officer Sheila Gonzalez initiated negotiations with Ventura County to build a courthouse on the site of the new Juvenile Justice Complex. Under immediate past Presiding Judge Bruce Clark, the court was able to secure funding and began working with the County's Public Works Department to hire architects and contractors. The detailed process of reviewing designs and plans took place under Supervising Juvenile Judge Brian Back.

Ground breaking for the site occurred on February 21, 2003. Construction began in March 2003 and took 24 months to complete. The courthouse was designed by KMD Architects and built by S.J. Amoroso Construction Company, who also was the contractor for the complex's juvenile detention facility.

The 56,000 square foot court facility includes two juvenile dependency courtrooms, two juvenile delinquency courtrooms and two general trial courtrooms. It will be staffed by three judges and 30 superior court employees who will be reassigned from existing facilities.

Related staff from the offices of the district attorney, county counsel, public defender, probation agency, sheriff, and human services agency will also be housed in the new courthouse.

The new courthouse will include juvenile filing offices, mediation offices, a self-help center, and a special waiting room for children whose parents are conducting business with the court. In addition to juvenile matters, court staff will also be able to accept payments for traffic citations, installments, and collection accounts.

The \$16 million project is being funded from the existing penalty assessment on criminal and traffic fines deposited in the Courthouse Construction Fund. It is one of only a few courthouse construction projects to take place statewide in recent years as court facilities transfer to state ownership under the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002.

The first phase of the Juvenile Justice Complex, a 420-bed detention and commitment facility to replace the Clifton Tatum Center and Frank A. Colston Youth Center, opened in January 2004. It was funded, in part, by a \$40.5 million grant obtained by the County of Ventura Probation Agency from the state Board of Corrections. The grant was one of the largest ever given for a juvenile facility.

The complex was officially named after Justice Steven Z. Perren by the Board of Supervisors in January 2001 in recognition of his strong efforts to bring the project to fruition. When completed, the 45-acre complex will bring courtrooms, classrooms, counseling services, administrative offices and the detention facility to one location. It will significantly change juvenile justice in Ventura County.

###